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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/639,460	08/13/2003	Kazutaka Yanagita	1232-4590US2	5736

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EXAMINER

OSELE, MARK A

ART UNIT PAPER NUMBER

1734

DATE MAILED: 06/02/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/639,460

Applicant(s)

YANAGITA ET AL.

Examiner

Mark A Osele

Art Unit

1734

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☐ Responsive to communication(s) filed on ____.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 41-52 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) 48-52 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 41-45 and 47 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☒ Claim(s) 46 is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) ____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 13 August 2003 is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. 09/435,285 and 09/
 - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date ____.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. ____.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: ____.

DETAILED ACTION

Election/Restrictions

1. Restriction to one of the following inventions is required under 35 U.S.C. 121:
 - I. Claims 41-47, drawn to a separating apparatus, classified in class 156, subclass 584.
 - II. Claims 48-52, drawn to a method for processing a plate shaped sample, classified in class 156, subclass 344.
2. The inventions are distinct, each from the other because of the following reasons:
Inventions II and I are related as process and apparatus for its practice. The inventions are distinct if it can be shown that either: (1) the process as claimed can be practiced by another materially different apparatus or by hand, or (2) the apparatus as claimed can be used to practice another and materially different process. (MPEP § 806.05(e)). In this case the portion of the process that can be performed by the apparatus can also be practiced by hand.
3. Because these inventions are distinct for the reasons given above and have acquired a separate status in the art as shown by their different classification, restriction for examination purposes as indicated is proper.

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4. During a telephone conversation with John Harroun on May 26, 2004 a provisional election was made with traverse to prosecute the invention of Group I, claims 41-47. Affirmation of this election must be made by applicant in replying to this Office action. Claims 48-52 are withdrawn from further consideration by the examiner, 37 CFR 1.142(b), as being drawn to a non-elected invention.

5. Applicant is reminded that upon the cancellation of claims to a non-elected invention, the inventorship must be amended in compliance with 37 CFR 1.48(b) if one or more of the currently named inventors is no longer an inventor of at least one claim remaining in the application. Any amendment of inventorship must be accompanied by a request under 37 CFR 1.48(b) and by the fee required under 37 CFR 1.17(i).

Double Patenting

6. The nonstatutory double patenting rejection is based on a judicially created doctrine grounded in public policy (a policy reflected in the statute) so as to prevent the unjustified or improper timewise extension of the "right to exclude" granted by a patent and to prevent possible harassment by multiple assignees. See *In re Goodman*, 11 F.3d 1046, 29 USPQ2d 2010 (Fed. Cir. 1993); *In re Longi*, 759 F.2d 887, 225 USPQ 645 (Fed. Cir. 1985); *In re Van Ornum*, 686 F.2d 937, 214 USPQ 761 (CCPA 1982); *In re Vogel*, 422 F.2d 438, 164 USPQ 619 (CCPA 1970); and, *In re Thorington*, 418 F.2d 528, 163 USPQ 644 (CCPA 1969).

A timely filed terminal disclaimer in compliance with 37 CFR 1.321(c) may be used to overcome an actual or provisional rejection based on a nonstatutory double patenting ground provided the conflicting application or patent is shown to be commonly owned with this application. See 37 CFR 1.130(b).

Effective January 1, 1994, a registered attorney or agent of record may sign a terminal disclaimer. A terminal disclaimer signed by the assignee must fully comply with 37 CFR 3.73(b).

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7. Claims 41, 42, 44, and 45 are rejected under the judicially created doctrine of double patenting over claims 1, 1, 9, and 8 respectively of U. S. Patent No. 6,672,358 since the claims, if allowed, would improperly extend the "right to exclude" already granted in the patent.

The subject matter claimed in the instant application is fully disclosed in the patent and is covered by the patent since the patent and the application are claiming common subject matter, as follows: A processing system for processing a plate shaped sample comprising a separating apparatus to separate the sample into upper and lower samples while holding the plate shaped sample horizontally; an inverting apparatus arranged to pivot the separated upper sample through about 180 degrees; a conveyor mechanism arranged to convey the separated upper sample from the separating apparatus to the inverting apparatus while supporting the separated upper sample from an upper side thereof; a cleaning apparatus arranged to clean the upper and lower separated samples; a conveyor mechanism arranged to convey the separated lower sample from the separating apparatus to the cleaning apparatus, to convey the separated upper sample from the separating apparatus to the inverting apparatus, and to convey the separated upper sample pivoted by the inverting apparatus from the inverting apparatus to the cleaning apparatus; and a centering apparatus arranged to center the plate shaped sample to be separated by the separating apparatus, wherein the conveyor mechanism is further arranged to convey the plate shaped sample from the centering apparatus to the separating apparatus.

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Furthermore, there is no apparent reason why applicant was prevented from presenting claims corresponding to those of the instant application during prosecution of the application which matured into a patent. See *In re Schneller*, 397 F.2d 350, 158 USPQ 210 (CCPA 1968). See also MPEP § 804.

8. Claims 43 and 47 are rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claim 1 of U.S. Patent No. 6,672,358 in view of Okamura et al. Claim 1 of U.S. Patent No. 6,672,358 shows the claimed invention except for storage containers and peripheral holders. Okamura et al. shows a wafer processing apparatus with cassettes, 12, in which semiconductor wafers are loaded and unloaded for processing. The conveyor which conveys the wafers from the cassettes to the various processing stations hold the wafers on the peripheral portion using abutting surfaces, 45, 46 (column 4, lines 10-17; column 5, lines 1-5). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to add the particular conveyor and cassettes shown by Okamura et al. into the apparatus of U.S. Patent No. 6,672,358 because Okamura et al. shows this system to be effective for automated processing of semiconductor wafers.

Allowable Subject Matter

9. Claim 46 is objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

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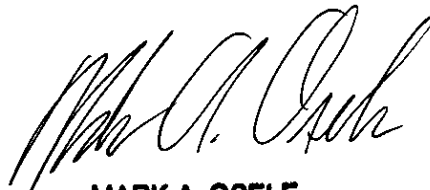
10. The following is a statement of reasons for the indication of allowable subject matter: None of the prior art suggests the conveyor to also be the inverting device.

Conclusion

11. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Mark A Osele whose telephone number is 571-272-1235. The examiner can normally be reached on Mon-Fri 9:30-6:00.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Richard Crispino can be reached on 571-272-1226. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).



MARK A. OSELE
PRIMARY EXAMINER

May 29, 2004